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First Committee
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New York

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Lamba (Malawi): First, on behalf of the Malawi delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to join representatives who have spoken before me in congratulating you, Sir, upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I should also like to extend our appreciation to the previous Chairman, Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary, for his work during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your personal dedication to decisive disarmament and non-proliferation will bring our discussions to a successful conclusion. My delegation assures you of its full cooperation and support in the tasks ahead of us all.

As we continue the deliberations of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, we are mindful of the fact that not long ago we commemorated the sad anniversary of the tragic 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. We share the grief at that tragedy and note that the attacks proved that the world faces a serious new threat against international security through terrorism. It is our sincere wish that our common resolve should now be galvanized to stop such threats, including that posed by the dangers of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons falling into the hands of the wrong people: terrorists.

Weapons of mass destruction are a threat to human security throughout the world as their potential for destruction is so ghastly. In this regard, Malawi condemns the development of such weapons and regrets to note that the 13 measures on nuclear disarmament annexed to the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have not been fully implemented by most Member States. It is our hope that all States with nuclear weapons will strive towards the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Another area about which my delegation is deeply concerned is the multiplication and illegal use of small arms and light weapons. Malawi continues to suffer from the menace of crime and violence. Incessant criminal activities — for instance, murder, robbery and car thefts perpetrated by armed gangs — which are on the increase in the country, are all attributed to the illicit trade, supply and stockpiling of small arms and light weapons. Malawi is therefore anxiously looking forward to the adoption of a comprehensive package of far-reaching measures that will lead to a world order of zero tolerance for the illicit trade in these dangerous weapons. In addition, commitment in this endeavour is of the utmost importance because Malawi believes that there can be no lasting political and social stability or meaningful economic development in the regions and countries most seriously affected by the menace of small arms and light weapons until those weapons are obliterated. The active involvement of every Member State at the

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level of regional, continental and international organizational is crucial to the campaign against the menace of small arms. This must also be done in close collaboration with civil society and other stake-holders at all levels. In this regard, all countries have a great responsibility to each other to succeed in this endeavour. Certainly we need to work in unison to solve this problem.

The world today has witnessed with horror the extent to which the illicit supply and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons have inflamed and prolonged internal conflicts and civil wars, which are sustained through the laundering of proceeds from the illegal arms trade by networks of international criminals. These criminal syndicates have seized the opportunity to exploit the apparent global disorder brought about by increasing international deregulation, liberalization and lax cross-border movement and trade. They openly and consciously flout and bypass national laws and international treaties, thereby making it difficult for Governments to keep them within the bounds of national laws and legally instituted law-enforcement regimes. Invariably, these arms peddlers and brokers have well-protected and politically powerful liaisons, which aggravates the difficulty of monitoring the flow and direction of small arms and light weapons. To this end, Malawi hails collective measures implemented by the international community, measures such as: the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in July 2001; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on the control of small arms, ammunition and other related materials; the Bamako Declaration; and other measures established against criminal offences under national laws in order to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacturing and excessive accumulation of, trafficking in and possession and use of these harmful arms.

As a member of the Southern African Development Community, my delegation is pleased by the outcome of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which was held in June this year. We welcome Angola as the latest member of SADC to ratify the Convention.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to this Committee as the appropriate forum for open dialogue and debate on the issues of disarmament and for pursuing the common goal of a multilateral approach to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Manalo (Philippines): Allow me first to join others in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. My delegation is convinced that your vast experience will steer us to a fruitful and meaningful conclusion of the Committee's work at this session. We pledge to you and your Bureau our delegation's full support and cooperation. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and his colleagues in the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts in furthering the cause of disarmament. Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala's statement has given us a comprehensive and up-to-date view of where we stand on disarmament issues at this time. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). We wish further to welcome the newest Members of the United Nations, Timor-Leste and Switzerland.

Recent developments on the issues of nuclear proliferation and disarmament paint a mixed picture. In this regard, my delegation notes recent promising developments such as: first, the signing by the United States and the Russian Federation of the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty, which significantly reduces the strategic nuclear weapons of the two countries; secondly, Cuba's decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco); thirdly, the continued increase in the number of signatures and ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); and, fourthly, the agreement of the Central Asian States to conclude a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In this connection, my country sees nuclear-weapon-free zones not only as instruments for nuclear non-proliferation but also as important contributions to nuclear disarmament. In our own region we remain hopeful that fruitful negotiations with nuclear Powers on a South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone could lead to its full implementation in the near future.

On the other hand, we view with concern the lack of progress in the multilateral arena of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We share in the expressions of disappointment over events such as: first, the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on its programme of work for the last six years, stalling negotiations on important disarmament issues such as the fissile material cut-off treaty. Secondly, notwithstanding the continued increase in signatures and ratifications, we regret the failure of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force. In this regard we join the call for States, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, and that have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. Thirdly, the difficulty of moving on with nuclear disarmament under the NPT process as the collective and unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States for a transparent, accountable and verifiable elimination of nuclear arsenals, which was regarded with much promise two years ago after the 2000 NPT Review Conference, has largely been unrealized. Furthermore, the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons can only be realized with universal adherence to and implementation of the NPT. Finally, the much-delayed convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV) is another cause for concern. In this regard, much work has already been done over the years in this Committee and in the Disarmament Commission on the agenda and objectives of SSOD IV. Let us build on that, mindful of the fast-developing events in international peace and security.

We note your statement, Sir, on the "unfinished agenda of eliminating biological and chemical weapons" (*A/C.1/57/PV.2, p. 3*) and we support the call for compliance with the requirements with respect to the verified destruction of weapon stockpiles to ensure the elimination of those weapons. My country also urges universal membership of both the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions.

Those disappointing realities, seemingly daunting, should serve as a challenge in our work in the Committee. The events of 11 September 2001 make more urgent the implementation of many of the practical measures identified in the draft resolutions presented at this session. The delays in concrete progress towards eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, which have been referred to as a crisis in multilateral disarmament diplomacy, now require priority attention in the aftermath of 11 September 2001. Terrorist acts, especially those with the possible use of weapons of mass destruction, threaten international peace and security. At the same time, policies to counter terrorism also influence international peace and security. My delegation believes that now more than ever it is imperative to strengthen negotiations in the multilateral disarmament arena to respond to threats posed by global terrorism.

As we try to overcome the stumbling blocks faced in implementing most of the international disarmament agreements, it is time to remind ourselves of our common objective: to make the world a safer place now and in the future by eliminating these destructive weapons. Perhaps focusing on a common end will narrow the differences in approach.

International peace and security are equally threatened by small weapons — small arms and light weapons and landmines. The recognition of the security, humanitarian and development consequences of the proliferation and abuse of small arms and light weapons, which led to the adoption of the Programme of Action at last year's United Nations Conference, is today considered to be a significant step in the right direction on disarmament.

In this regard, in July 2002 the Philippines hosted a regional seminar on implementing the United Nations Programme of Action, which was co-sponsored by Canada, and in which representatives from eight ASEAN countries, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Australia participated. Observers from some European Union countries and the United States also participated. The discussions at the seminar were greatly enriched by the participation of representatives from civil society and the arms industry, which my country, as host, invited. The Philippines recognizes that conditions and circumstances vary in each region and that there are particular challenges that are best addressed by regional approaches. The Co-Chairmen's report on the seminar contained principles for developing a regional arrangement to deal with the problems of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. It also recommended some 32 practical measures which it proposed to submit for the consideration of the Association of South-East Asian Nations for a possible regional arrangement. We look forward to sharing the seminar's result during next

year's biennial meeting to consider progress in implementing the Programme of Action. Simultaneously, with the seminar a symbolic arms-destruction ceremony was also held to coincide with the first anniversary of the 2001 United Nations Conference. More than 1,000 confiscated, seized and surplus small arms and light weapons were destroyed during the ceremony.

We note the importance of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific as a forum for addressing the common disarmament goals of our region. The operations of the Centre should therefore be continued and I take this opportunity to thank its Director for his participation and contribution to the meaningful outcome of the regional seminar on small arms and light weapons which was hosted by my country.

Finally, my delegation wishes to commend and encourage the interest and efforts of civil society to contribute to the debate on disarmament issues. Their interest in keeping our world safe through disarmament is the same as ours. Their unbounded ideas enrich the discussions in the disarmament forum.

Mr. Adamia (Georgia): Since this is the first time I have taken the floor in the Committee, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election. My delegation is confident that under your skilful stewardship we can successfully accomplish all objectives set for the work of the Committee.

In the last decade the global security landscape has been undergoing dramatic changes. An unprecedented level of interdependence and globalization has transformed the meaning of international peace and security itself to encompass inter-State and intersocietal relations and human security. The new international security architecture is increasingly called upon to respond to the challenges of arms proliferation and drug smuggling that are nowadays inextricably linked with extremist and aggressive separatists to sustain conflict, violence and terrorism.

In that respect, Georgia supports the full implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which includes a wide range of measures to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, in dealing with the problem of illicit arms we must utilize already agreed legal instruments, in particular the Protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components. We also welcome the proposal of the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, to establish an international commission on weapons of mass destruction to examine problems relating to the production, stockpiling, proliferation and terrorist use of such weapons. In close partnership with the Security Council's Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC), the commission could address the issue of countering terrorist threats. Here I have to underscore the value of the recommendations of the United Nations policy working group on terrorism on the establishment of a mechanism under the Department for Disarmament Affairs to make use of existing United Nations resources and specialized databases and information received from member States to assist the CTC by providing analysis and advice on appropriate cooperation between the Security Council and the relevant operational agencies in response to terrorist threats. Likewise, we welcome the recommendation on strengthening the capabilities of United Nations peacekeeping missions to identify and counter terrorist threats.

We note with satisfaction the numerous positive developments that contribute to the consolidation of international peace and security. In this respect we commend the decisions of Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to declare Central Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are confident that the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty — the Moscow Treaty — concluded between the United States and Russia to reduce their deployments of strategic nuclear weapons, is an important element of the new global security architecture and serves as a basis for the implementation of joint commitments as set out in the United States-Russia joint declaration on a new strategic relationship.

In speaking of disarmament and security, I will take the risk again to draw attention to aggressive separatists and extremists as the main threats to international peace and security. The metastasizing of "white spots" —zones of conflict that are beyond the reach of the national and international legal order — has brought us to the verge of fragmentation of the

international system with all its consequences of spreading violence and drug trafficking and creating havens for breeding terrorism. The question is whether we again decide to abscond and distance ourselves from this danger just to follow established patterns. That threat, although not visible in this Room, is felt in many communities around the globe. Therefore, I am afraid we do not any longer have the luxury of remaining indifferent. We must respond. I assure the Committee that what lies at the heart of the problem of these "white spots" is not the intrinsic nature of some people to resort to violence or be receptive to extremism and terrorism; it is about broken commitments, ill-defined national interests and a residual cold-war-era mentality.

Everything I have said is true for two separatist regions of my country, Abkhazia and the former South Ossetia. Both regions effectively developed into ethnocratic and terrorist enclaves, with an increasingly aggressive process of militarization. As a result, a huge quantity of armaments, mines and ammunition has accumulated in those territories. Just three days ago, South Ossetia's separatist regime received yet another shipment from Russia through the border checkpoint controlled solely by Russian border guards. I have to add that these kinds of shipments have never stopped crossing the Russian-Georgian border into Abkhazia either. These shipments, which in Russian terms would be called humanitarian aid, are in reality a clear case of unabated proliferation of firearms and ammunition. These actions are clear cases of divergence between the goals declared and the means employed. On the one hand we have a commitment by Russia to prevent illicit arms smuggling and the proliferation of nuclear and other dangerous materials, but on the other Russia deliberately creates conditions favouring those dangers.

The situation in those enclaves of instability also pose threats of nuclear terrorism. The Institute of Physics and Technology in Sukhumi, Abkhazia, Georgia, is our primary concern; the conditions for the storage of radioactive materials, according to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) assessment, are deplorable. At least on one occasion uranium that disappeared from the Institute could have fallen into the hands of terrorists. The Institute still falls under the actual control of Russian authorities who, against all odds, still insist on the construction of nuclear waste storage in that orderless, lawless, unpredictable separatist region with all the consequences that stem from that. It is noteworthy that smuggling of radioactive materials cannot be excluded through the same porous Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region sections of the Georgian-Russian border.

As part of the larger problem, I should like to state that since 1995 more than 197 unaccounted-for sources of radiation have been found in Georgia, left deliberately by the Russian army — among them, uranium, strontium, caesium and other sources. The death toll of victims of radiation is on the rise, putting aside the danger to which the Georgian population is unknowingly exposed on a daily basis.

In general, the situation in Abkhazia has important security and disarmament dimensions due to the illegal presence of the Russian military base in Gudauta. Apart from directly participating in the conflict in Abkhazia, it was providing arms to the separatist regime. It is on the premises of that base that a number of Chechen terrorists were trained as long as they kept fighting against Georgia. Among them the now infamous Shamil Basayev. Reportedly, the Russian special services still maintain the terrorist training camps in Abkhazia. The illegal operation of the Gudauta base itself constitutes a good example of Russia's selectivity in honouring commitments in the field of disarmament. Interestingly enough, Russia has not only flagrantly flouted the 1999 Istanbul agreement on the withdrawal of Russian military bases within the framework of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), but now demands 11 years for the withdrawal of 3,000 servicemen from Georgia. It has even declared the Gudauta base closed. However, it has denied all requests for international verification.

As a result we have the unique situation of having Russia in multiple incarnations — Russia as a protector of the separatists and supplier of arms for them, the sole peace process facilitator and peacekeeper in the region, the majority of whose population has been granted Russian citizenship. What else is left? Regrettably, I have to state, much more.

Suffice it to say that for the past three years, since the resumption of the war in Chechnya the Russian air forces have violated Georgia's airspace 115 times; 18 of these incidents resulted in bombings, causing the death of one civilian and multiple injuries. Having exported Chechen fighters to Georgia, Russia itself now levels accusations against us of supporting

terrorism and continuously threatens aggression. Moreover, the unprecedentedly hysterical campaign unleashed in Russia's mass media is aimed at creating an enemy image of Georgia. This cynically mounted propaganda, sponsored by the Russian Government, is especially alarming in the twenty-first century.

Still, there is hope. During the meeting of the Presidents of Georgia and Russia a few days ago, an understanding was reached on the need to normalize relations between the two countries, and in particular to continue negotiations on an overall agreement between Georgia and Russia and on the removal of Russian military bases. The joint patrolling of the border has also been agreed upon, as well as the appointment of special envoys to facilitate joint efforts to fight terrorism. Having said that, I would not take the risk of being overly optimistic as the violations of my country's airspace continue up to this moment. Occasional threats against Georgia are still voiced in Moscow. Most important, support for the separatists in Georgia remains Russia's unwavering commitment.

Despite the best efforts of the members of this Committee and the entire world community, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and related materials, aggressive separatism and extremism will be a defining security challenge for this new century. The problem of proliferation is not confined to nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. Illegal transfers of small arms and light weapons are also a significant problem. Until every State is held accountable for its actions, we will continue to face the same daunting challenges that we have today. Not until then will we manage to preserve global peace and security.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I have the pleasure of extending to you, Sir, the warmest congratulations of the Myanmar delegation on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I pledge to you the fullest cooperation of my delegation in the advancement of the work of the Committee under your able leadership. Our tribute also goes to the other members of the Bureau. We also pay tribute to Mr. André Erdös of Hungary for his important contributions to the work of the First Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

We are delighted to welcome the representatives of Switzerland and Timor-Leste, whose countries have just joined the United Nations.

This session of the First Committee is taking place against the background of disturbing trends and the growing urgency and importance of arms control and disarmament. This is a difficult time not conducive to arms control and disarmament. New strategic doctrines for pre-emptive strikes and the first use of nuclear weapons, unilateralism, lack of political will and lack of vision to promote common security for all States have negative effects and erode multilateralism in the field of arms control and disarmament. However, the current negative picture of arms control and disarmament does not mean that the importance of arms control and disarmament is declining. On the contrary, the urgency and importance of arms control and disarmament is greater than ever before. Rates of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are growing. Possible attacks with weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, have now become a clear and present danger in the world today. Such threats emanate not only from State actors but also from non-State actors such as extremist terrorists. The tasks that lie before us are daunting and difficult.

In the overall dark picture of arms control and disarmament there are a few gleams of light. One area in which there have been positive developments is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We firmly believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, based on arrangements freely arrived at among the countries of the regions concerned, is an effective measure of geographical limitation of nuclear proliferation and contributes to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It also contributes to the strengthening of regional security and to the maintenance of international peace and stability. Accordingly, we welcome the recent agreement at the expert level among Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone will be the fifth nuclear-weapon-free zone in the populated areas of the world and the first such zone in the northern hemisphere. This landmark achievement, when it materializes, will constitute a significant contribution to the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

We should also like to express our deep appreciation and support for the consolidation of the nuclear-free status of Mongolia and for the joint

statement of the five nuclear-weapon States providing security assurances to it.

We attach great importance to achieving the universality of the membership of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We therefore welcome the recent decision of Cuba to accede to the NPT. That will constitute a significant step towards achieving our cherished goal of universal membership of the NPT.

We take note with appreciation of the signing of the United States-Russia Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty — the Moscow Treaty — as a significant step towards reducing their deployed strategic nuclear weapons, provided that these reductions are implemented according to the benchmarks of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency.

While attaching great importance to the issue of weapons of mass destruction, we do not underestimate the problem of small arms and light weapons, which each year kill an estimated half a million people and maim many more people throughout the world. The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001, adopted a Programme of Action. We hope that the biennial meetings, the first of which will be next year, will be able to generate the much-needed momentum for follow-up work on the Programme of Action. We should like to express our preference for the convening of the biennial meeting in New York in July 2003 in order to make possible the broadest possible participation of Member States.

We note with satisfaction that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has resolved its difficulties and is now conducting its activities with renewed momentum under the leadership of the new Director-General, Mr. Rogelio Pfirter. We hope that OPCW will be able to further advance the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and to further promote cooperation among Member States and signatory States.

We note with regret, however, that the Fifth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference, held in Geneva in September 2002, adjourned without any concrete results. We hope that the reconvened BWC Review Conference in November this year will be able to reach agreement on substantive follow-up work and on the strengthening of the BWC regime.

The horrendous terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 have left an indelible mark in our memory. The moral revulsion and psychological shock generated by these tragic events are still with us. The incidents of 11 September 2001 mark a watershed in many ways. They also have had tremendous impacts on arms control and disarmament. We can and should draw many lessons from the incidents of 11 September 2001. One lesson that stands out is that terrorism is a global problem requiring a global response. Multilateralism is one of the imperatives of the world today. Nuclear deterrence does not work against such threats. Security threats today are different from those of the twentieth century. Security problems today have nuclear as well as non-nuclear dimensions. Terrorism is a multifaceted problem requiring a multifaceted response. In this context, we in Myanmar oppose terrorism in all its manifestations and we are doing our utmost to combat this horrendous scourge.

In this era of globalization there are hardly any international issues that can be resolved by one single nation, alone. Global problems require global actions. Thus, multilateralism is an imperative in the world today. Nowhere is that imperative more manifest than in the field of arms control and disarmament. We therefore welcome and fully support a new Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) draft resolution entitled "Promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation" (A/C.1/57/L.10). It is a timely and relevant draft resolution addressing a pressing issue of the day.

While talking about multilateralism, let me say that we are disappointed by the continuing impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. This single multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament has been paralysed for the past four years. We urge all member States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to show maximum flexibility in order that the Conference can overcome the current impasse, agree on a programme of work and start its substantive work at the beginning of its 2003 session.

On 8 July 1996 the International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* reaffirmed, by the unanimous decision of all the judges of the Court, that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and

bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. Since then a decent interval of more than six years has elapsed. As a matter of fact, considering that the General Assembly adopted a resolution in 1994 (resolution 49/75 K) requesting an advisory opinion of the Court on that question, more than a decade will have elapsed by the time the 2005 NPT Review Conference is held. We should now ask the very pertinent question of whether the obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament — that is, the total elimination of nuclear weapons — has been fulfilled. The answer to that question will certainly be in the negative. It is therefore incumbent on all the States parties to ensure that practical steps to implement that obligation are speeded up in order to achieve our shared goal of nuclear disarmament.

Since the dawn of the nuclear age nearly six decades ago, a nuclear sword of Damocles has been hanging over mankind. Today, with the introduction of new strategic doctrines and policies that contemplate the actual use of nuclear weapons, that sword has become more threatening as a clear and present danger. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons, which has been ever present as a remote and tenuous possibility since the advent of these weapons, has now come to the forefront. That threat is now staring us in the eye. The proper function of nuclear weapons is to prevent nuclear war but not to fight one. For those reasons we urge that, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, all States refrain from the use of nuclear weapons in settling their disputes in international relations. Pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the most reasonable course of action or policy is to agree on an undertaking of no first use of nuclear weapons, and no use or threat of use of these weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

All States parties to the NPT are firmly committed to nuclear disarmament. Indeed, the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference sets out an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The will to fulfil that unequivocal undertaking needs to be demonstrated by the full implementation of the 13 practical steps. Progressive and systematic steps to dismantle and eliminate nuclear weapons, the irreversibility of nuclear reduction and disarmament measures, further reduction of the operational status of nuclear weapons, diminution of the role of nuclear weapons, accountability and verifiability must all be an integral part of such a nuclear disarmament process.

We firmly believe that the NPT is the cornerstone of the regime of nuclear non-proliferation. The first Preparatory Committee meeting for the 2005 NPT Review Conference, held in New York in April 2002, made a fairly good start. It is essential that there is a good follow-up at the second Preparatory Committee meeting, to be held in Geneva next April. We should spare no efforts to ensure that the 2005 NPT Review Conference is a success and produces concrete results in terms of the implementation of the commitments of the States parties at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, as well as the optimal utilization of the strengthened review process.

The countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. However, the nuclear-weapon States have yet to accede to the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty. For the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone to become fully operational and effective it is essential that the nuclear-weapon States accede to the Protocol at the earliest possible date. We welcome the announcement by China of its readiness to accede to the Protocol. We reiterate our call to other nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

We should also like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for the commendable job it has been doing in promoting regional dialogue on regional and international disarmament issues. We believe that the activities of the Regional Centre should be further expanded and enhanced and that the Centre should be provided with the resources necessary to carry out its activities effectively.

Paragraph 45 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD I), held in 1978, clearly sets out that the priority in disarmament negotiations shall be nuclear weapons. In 2000, the Millennium Assembly, in paragraph 9 of the Millennium Declaration, resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass

destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. In 2002 the priority accorded to nuclear disarmament is even more relevant in the light of recent developments. For these reasons, although other disarmament issues also have their legitimate claim on the attention of the international community, it is the view of my delegation that nuclear disarmament remains the highest priority on the arms control and disarmament agenda. To reflect the priority and importance accorded to this subject by the international community, my delegation will be submitting its traditional draft resolution on nuclear disarmament with the broadest support of other sponsors. We join hands with all like-minded Member States and civil society in our international endeavours for nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): I should like at the outset to offer you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of Israel our sincerest congratulations on the assumption of your duties as Chairman of the First Committee. I am certain that we shall benefit from your guidance and wisdom during our deliberations in the coming days and weeks. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

Among the issues on the agenda of the First Committee in recent years have been two draft resolutions regarding the Middle East. One deals with the notion of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. Such texts have commanded consensus for more than 20 years, and while we have certain reservations regarding their language, we attach great importance to the annual endorsement of this idea. We do so particularly as the area of the Middle East is clearly lacking in any confidence-building measures or dialogue on affairs relating to arms control and regional security.

The second draft resolution relates to the risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. This is a contentious text that seeks to focus on only one aspect of the regional security environment and that ignores the region's greatest proliferation dangers and its inherent instability. It also chooses to disregard the extreme hostility of certain countries in the region that continue to reject any form of peaceful reconciliation and coexistence with Israel. In many ways, the submission of these draft resolutions constitutes an annual declaration by their sponsors that they prefer to continue to try to alienate Israel rather than engage it and pursue ideas that might foster and encourage cooperative measures for the good of regional stability. It is unfortunate that this is the message that they have chosen to send my country.

In contrast to that approach, I should like to use this opportunity to emphasize Israel's resolve to realize a vision of peace and stability in our region through peaceful and diplomatic means. Confronted with such multifaceted security problems, I suspect that not a few countries would long ago have abandoned any hope for peace. Our national ethos is based on the inspiration of hope and we shall continue to explore every avenue in the pursuit of a wider regional peace.

Israel continues to view the regional context as the primary and essential framework to move forward critical arms control measures predicated on a comprehensive and durable peace in the area of the Middle East. In recent years, Israel has sought to lay enduring foundations of peace and stability in our region, based on a historic reconciliation, embodying the notions of compromise, mutual trust and respect, open borders and good-neighbourliness. The basis for coexistence between Israel and its neighbours was laid in the bilateral peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan and we still hope to widen this process.

Relationships of peace could put an end to arms races in our region and lead to reductions, to the minimal levels required for national self-defence, of standing military forces, defence expenditures and conventional arms. Effective arms control measures, however, can be achieved and sustained only in a region where wars, armed conflicts, terror, political hostility, incitement and non-recognition cease to be features of everyday life. We have a long and complicated journey ahead of us, so even small and modest steps could play a vital role and could be the indispensable key to progress.

We firmly believe that the political reality in our region mandates a practical step-by-step approach, based on a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbours, accompanied and followed by confidence-building measures and arrangements regarding conventional weapons, and culminating in the eventual establishment of a mutually verifiable zone free of ballistic missiles and of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. That zone should emanate from, and encompass, all the States of the region, by virtue of free and direct negotiations among them. It is in this spirit that Israel has been part of the consensus on draft resolutions regarding the establishment of a nuclear-

weapon-free zone in the Middle East. It is in that context that the draft resolution (A/C.1/57/L.27) regarding the risk of nuclear proliferation plays no role in moving the regional parties nearer to that objective.

If we are seriously to address the myriad of security problems in the Middle East in a balanced manner, it is incumbent on us all to recall and examine various regional characteristics that challenge and undermine stability in our area. Over the years, the Middle East has been a testing ground and killing field for extreme acts of violence in all their different guises. Terror, in the form of cross-border attacks, the indiscriminate murder of civilians, attacks on civil aviation, the use of short-range rockets against population centres, savage bombings in universities and the ultimate insanity of suicide bombings, has become a part of our reality. These terrorist acts in one form or another, have accompanied and confronted us in recent years and have touched almost every family in Israel. These acts are directed towards innocent civilians in the most random manner, intending to inflict the greatest harm on the greatest number of people. Terror has become a strategic weapon in the context of the Middle East.

Similarly, conventional weapons in sufficient quantities, particularly in the hands of countries or even non-State actors that refuse to recognize, and even declare their intention of destroying, a country, can have a clear strategic impact. Conventional weapons and small arms have throughout the years continued to take a deadly toll on human life. Small arms have not had small consequences. Any people that has lost a third of its number in living memory cannot allow itself to underestimate the killing power of any kind of weaponry. We follow, therefore, very closely, the flow of increasingly sophisticated conventional arms into the area and their impact on our security.

As we further examine the present security situation in the Middle East, we face the ever-growing threat of ballistic missile proliferation in several countries and also the excessive number — in their thousands — of short-range, ground-to-ground rockets that have been transferred to Hizbullah in south Lebanon by Iran. The memories of Katyusha rockets terrorizing our civilian population in the north have not faded. In addition, Israel was also attacked without provocation by Iraq by about 40 ballistic missiles in the last Gulf war, more than a decade ago. We continue to live in the shadow of such threats. While Israel has been supportive of international efforts to come to terms with the problem of ballistic missile proliferation, we note with genuine regret that these efforts have yet to have an impact on the Middle East.

In our area it would be impossible to forget the chemical weapons that have been used in wars by more than one State in the region; Iraq has even used such weapons against its own Kurdish citizens in Halabja. There are other States in the region that possess extensive chemical and biological weapon capabilities with the means to deliver them. I naturally looked for the draft resolutions in the Committee that deal with this troubling aspect of Middle Eastern security, but my search was in vain.

In order to complete this bleak picture, the past activities of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Iraq demonstrate the real risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. Other countries in the region still seek nuclear weapons and the technology to sustain such a capability. In Iran, for example, these capabilities are sought in conjunction with longer-range means of delivery. Over the past year we have witnessed an escalation in the rhetoric that Iran has directed against Israel. In the light of that, we have little choice but to regard this combination of mass destruction capabilities with extreme hostility to Israel as an emerging existential threat.

As if this harsh regional reality were not sufficient, we witnessed last year a new form of global strategic terror that shook every civilized notion underpinning international peace and security. The tremors of the brutal and heartless attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are still being felt. Those acts against the United States were assaults on the entire civilized world, and no country can remain indifferent to their dire implications. The central danger of terror merging with weapons of mass destruction casts as dark a shadow on the strategic environment as it does on the regional one, particularly in the Middle East. It is clearly all the more alarming in a region in which certain countries have nurtured and sponsored terror as an everyday tool of diplomacy and also seek to develop weapons of mass destruction in contravention of their international commitments. If such countries are so willing to finance and supply rockets and conventional weaponry to terrorists, what

will prevent them from providing those same terrorists with non-conventional weapons? The international community cannot wait and allow this question to remain unanswered.

By considering the so-called risk resolution that singles out Israel in this body, the First Committee not only leaves the foregoing question unanswered, but also completely ignores additional and critical challenges to the stability of the entire Middle East. It also ignores the fact that there is no regional political process that could further peace and arms control in the area because of the deep and ingrained hostility to Israel. Progress in these critical areas can be achieved only by efforts from both sides. Furthermore, to attempt in effect to compare Israel — as some delegations in the Committee have done — with countries that have used chemical weapons against other States and even against their own citizens, launched ballistic missiles against other countries without provocation, systematically disregarded their legal commitments and obligations under arms control conventions, and assisted and sponsored terrorist groups — to mention only a few attributes — is unacceptable.

I should like to assure my fellow representatives that contentious one-sided draft resolutions will not move us closer to any viable concept of regional security in the Middle East, but they will prevent the First Committee from dealing with the truly urgent issues that demand the attention of this important body. I hope that other representatives will take these factors into account as they address and vote on the "risk" draft resolution in document A/C.1/57/L.27.

Israel cannot afford to ignore the reality of the area in which it lives, and though countries continue to deny our right to exist, we shall continue to participate and play a role in international conventions and initiatives that do not impair our vital margins of security. Last year I recalled the conventions in the realm of international security that we had signed or ratified and the other activities that we have undertaken in the area of small arms, landmines, the prevention of ballistic missile proliferation, adherence to the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, amongst others. We note with particular satisfaction that this is the tenth year of the United Nations Register and that more than 160 countries have participated in its reporting procedure. Israel's record in these regards can be compared favourably with that of any other country in the Middle, East and its respect for its international obligations has remained steadfast and consistent.

During the past year, particularly in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, we conducted a thorough review of various areas that could merit more concerted governmental action. For example, Israel attaches great importance to the strengthening of the physical protection of nuclear materials and recently ratified the relevant convention, the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. We are also currently examining and expediting internal procedures in our evaluation of other international conventions against terrorism.

In addition, Israel is currently nearing the conclusion of legislation that will consolidate the control of exports of chemical, biological and nuclear materials including dual-use items. We have sought through that legislation to harmonize our export controls with the provisions of the supplier regimes such as the Australia Group and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Already some years ago, Israel adopted the relevant legislation to implement the provisions of the MTCR. We hope that other countries too will take the necessary steps to enhance and tighten export controls of sensitive hardware and technology that could reach terrorist groups or States, which could retransfer those materials to terrorists. Indeed, Israel fully supports and is keenly interested in being associated with these regimes in view of the vital role they play in curbing proliferation. We look forward to being able to expand our dialogue with these regimes and develop our policy in that regard in the coming year.

Having referred so extensively to the various threats to international and regional security, I should like to emphasize that ultimately peace remains the vision and objective that can fundamentally transform the Middle East. Israel continues to search for any hand extended in peace. Peace is a vital component of national security and an indispensable basis for regional stability. Since the world stepped back from the abyss of the cold war, the Middle East has moved in the opposite direction. The region can still reverse course and redefine its destiny.

Mr. Al-Najar (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure at the outset to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Yemen, my sincerest congratulations on your election to the

chairmanship of this important Committee. We are fully confident that your vast diplomatic experience will contribute to strengthening our deliberations aimed at consolidating international security and bringing about a world free of weapons.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to underline its full readiness to cooperate with you in order to bring the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion. We would like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Under-Secretary-General of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the comprehensive statement he made on the issues of disarmament and international security, and for his valuable efforts to deal with the issues that face our world today in disarmament and the consolidation of international peace and security. We would also like to welcome Switzerland and Timor-Leste which have joined the Committee.

My country continues keenly to support all efforts made to maintain international peace and security. In this domain, the Republic of Yemen was one of the first States to sign international conventions and agreements to limit weapons of mass destruction — the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and other agreements on disarmament. My country believes that such conventions are important and necessary elements for making the world more peaceful and more stable. Despite continuous efforts by nations over the years to deal with the underlying causes that lead to military confrontations and destructive wars, the most perilous of its results being the international arms race in all its forms, the pace of international cooperation in disarmament is still extremely slow and disappointing.

Nuclear tests continue, and other prohibited weapons continue to be tested as well. The phenomenon of arms smuggling continues as does the illegal possession of dangerous weapons. Armed conflicts and wars have increased and the emergence of new phenomena represent a danger for the security of countries and their citizens, phenomena such as international terrorism, which does not know a particular religion or language. The terrorist assaults on New York and Washington are still being recalled by us; the tragedies and destruction they caused give us an incentive to consolidate international efforts to face terrorism in all its manifestations. The fact that 195 States have signed the NPT and CTBT and that 93 States have ratified these agreements is a clear indication of the desire of the States of the world for disarmament. We call on those States that have not yet ratified those agreements to accelerate their ratification process so that such treaties can enter into force. Here we would like to welcome the accession of Cuba to the NPT.

As for the Middle East and despite the many efforts made by the international community to establish it as a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, Israel is the only exception in the whole region. Israel has not ratified this Treaty and still represents an impediment to establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. Israel continues to possess military nuclear reactors outside the scope of international safeguards and aims at continuing its illegal occupation and exploitation of Palestinian and Arab territories, thus flouting the resolutions of international legitimacy and norms of international law, which prohibit such actions and aggressive policies that not only threaten our region but also threaten international peace and security. We call upon the international community to exert pressure on Israel to accede unconditionally to the NPT and to subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Republic of Yemen has welcomed all the conferences aimed at combating and eradicating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their destructive impact on the lives of civilians in order to support every international effort to prohibit illicit trading in such weapons. My delegation believes that the time has come to muster the political will to put an end to the destructive impact of the proliferation of more than 500 million pieces of small arms and light weapons, which lead to the kindling of wars, an expansion of their scope, and an increase in their victims. We cannot deny the close relationship that exists between the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and terrorism, organized crime and the drug trafficking. My country is about to promulgate a law limit and ultimately end this phenomenon.

Yemen is one country that has been affected by landmines. It has supported all international efforts aimed at eradicating such weapons because we can see the dangers they pose on the lives of civilians. Our country was one of the first to sign the Ottawa Convention, which deals with landmines and their

danger. For this purpose, Yemen established in 1998 a National Committee on Landmines, headed by a Minister of State and member of the Cabinet. It has a number of under-secretaries for different departments, such as the Departments of Local Government, Health, Education and Defence. The National Committee basically sets the strategies and national plans for the project to cleanse Yemeni territory of landmines in a framework based on the following detecting mines, mine clearance, increasing awareness of landmines, assisting victims of landmines and dealing with the environmental impact of landmines. In the area of landmine stockpiles, the National Committee, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and friendly countries, including the United States, has destroyed Yemen's total stockpile of 66,674 anti-personnel. The destruction of these landmines was in implementation of the Ottawa Convention, signed by my country in 1999. My country is considered the first member State of the Convention that has actually undertaken the destruction of its stockpile of anti-personnel mines. Here we wish to acknowledge the assistance provided by brotherly and friendly countries, among them Saudi Arabia, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Japan and Switzerland. We would like specifically to acknowledge the Federal Republic of Germany for the assistance it gave us in field surveys of areas affected by landmines, and in training Yemeni mine clearance and detection personnel since the mine clearance programme in the Republic of Yemen is one of the most successful in the region.

In conclusion, we would like to underline once again that collective international work is the best way to maintain international peace and security, a matter of great interest to the peoples and States of the world.

Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to start by joining the many members who have spoken before me since the beginning of our work in offering to you, Sir, warm congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee on disarmament and international security at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I address similar congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, who will be supporting you in your delicate task. All the best wishes for success from Cameroon go with you and I can assure you of the full support and complete cooperation of my delegation in the accomplishment of your mandate as Chairman of the Committee.

We would also like to voice our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary, for the remarkable work that was done under his chairmanship. To Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, I should like to say how much my country appreciates his constant and devoted personal commitment to the cause of disarmament.

The backdrop to our work is the memory of the odious attacks of 11 September 2001 and the clear message they conveyed of a new potential threat: the real risk of nuclear, biological or chemical terrorism. In that context I should like to express regret that the perception of this new threat has not only led to an increase in military budgets throughout the world and a reversal of the promising trends we have seen in the past decade in the area of arms control and disarmament, but it has also broken the forward momentum of the commitments to disarmament made at the Millennium Summit.

My country is a Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and fully supports its ultimate aim, which is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. My country continues to regard the NPT as the cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and encourages States parties to uphold their commitments in this area, and in particular to put into effect the 13 measures on which they agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

We welcome with satisfaction the decision of Cuba not only to become a party to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco, but also to become involved in the preparatory process for the 2005 Conference of Parties to the NPT. We believe that, indisputably, this is a major contribution to efforts to make the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty universal.

My delegation encourages the establishment, whenever possible and on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, of nuclear-weapon-free zones. Nuclear States should commit themselves not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against them. We regret that the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, has for three years shown itself unable to get out of the deadlock in which it finds itself because of persistent disagreement about

its work programme. Cameroon, which is a member of the Conference on Disarmament, will spare no effort next year to foster agreement in that respect.

Apart from that, although the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has recorded eight new signatures or ratifications, it is nevertheless deplorable that the Treaty has still not entered into force. My country will join in efforts encourage the signature and ratification of that Treaty, all the more so because it is to host a radionuclide station within the framework of the international monitoring system. It also seems to us to be of paramount importance that unilateral moratoriums on nuclear testing should continue to be observed.

In the field of weapons of mass destruction, other than nuclear weapons, Cameroon is seriously concerned at the notable failure of progress in the process of negotiation of a verification protocol of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, which has shown some movement this year, should henceforth be able to enjoy a sufficient level of resources to enable it appropriately to carry out its mission.

The spread and illicit movement of small arms and light weapons is another source of serious concern for Cameroon. The Programme of Action adopted in July 2001 at the end of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an important marker laid down on the path towards control of this worldwide scourge. It is no longer simply a matter of disarmament, but of a serious threat that continues to hang over international peace and security. In that respect, tomorrow, 11 October 2002, the Security Council, of which Cameroon is the President for the month of October and which bears the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, will be holding a public debate, open to all Member States, on the issue of small arms. That will be one further opportunity to take stock of what has been done, to explore new possible approaches, and to renew our common commitment to keep a careful eye on this issue.

Along this same line of thinking, at a time when the Register of Conventional Arms is celebrating its tenth anniversary, I am happy to announce that my country, an original signatory in December 1997 in Ottawa of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, on 19 September 2002 deposited its instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Cameroon continues to make an active contribution to the promotion of regional confidence-building measures, in particular within the framework of the activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which last March celebrated 10 years of existence. The Committee can claim credit, among other achievements, for the establishment of a subregional collective security mechanism called the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). The usefulness of the Advisory Committee no longer needs to be demonstrated, in particular as a framework for concerted action and for the formulation of confidence-building measures in Central Africa.

This is an appropriate place to reaffirm to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the great appreciation of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon for the constant support that it has given to the work of the Advisory Committee. I should like also to express Cameroon's gratitude to all interested Member States which have continued to make generous contributions to the trust fund for the Advisory Committee and I would encourage them to increase their support, if possible, so that the Advisory Committee can finance its full programme of activities.

I take this opportunity to exhort Member States to participate in large numbers in the public debate that the Security Council will be holding on 22 October 2002 on cooperation between the United Nations system and the Central African region in the maintenance of peace and security, in the presence of Ministers of the Economic Community of Central African States.

I can hardly conclude this statement without reiterating my country's full support for the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which remains a valuable instrument of support for regional initiatives in the areas of disarmament, peace and security. As underlined by the Secretary-General in his report (A/57/162), the Centre is still

confronted by grave financial difficulties that prevent it from accomplishing its mission to the fullest capacity. For the Centre to be viable it is essential for it to be able to rely on stable and increased financial backing from Member States. My delegation wishes also to express its great satisfaction at the manner in which the Disarmament Fellowship Programme is functioning. In particular we appreciate the Programme's remarkable contribution to broadening and strengthening our home-grown competence in the disarmament sphere.

Mr. Castellón Duarte (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like first, on behalf of my delegation, to express my warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at this session. Thanks to your experience and well-known diplomatic skills, our work is being conducted most efficiently. We offer you the support of our delegation in this undertaking. At the same time allow me to voice my appreciation to the other members of the Bureau.

My delegation endorses the statement made by the delegation of Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group. However, we should like to make the following observations of our own.

Right now we could state without fear of being mistaken that there is not a single region or zone in the world free from the disastrous consequences of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We could also say that the build-up of small arms and light weapons does not by itself trigger conflicts, but that, without a doubt, the ease with which they are procured fosters violence as a way to settle disputes and tends to exacerbate conflicts and make them deadlier. This ease of procurement blocks the development efforts of Governments and makes it harder to provide help and relief when conflicts break out.

According to information from experts on this subject, more than 500 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation worldwide: in other words, roughly one for every 12 individuals. These are the weapons most used in the conflicts that have developed over the past 12 years. The same data tell us that during this period they have taken a total of more than 4 million lives, most of them defenceless civilians. Trafficking in these weapons is linked to drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime, mercenary activities and other types of criminal conduct threatening the peace and stability of nations, which has prompted our country to adopt firm measures to combat them.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects held in July 2001 marks a major step in multilateral disarmament: a step to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, and a reasonable and extensive approach in coming to grips with the different problems associated with the various aspects of this trade at national, regional and global levels. We hope that the process now begun can be completed as soon as possible and will lead us to a legally binding system.

At the subregional level, Nicaragua signed the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America in December 1995. This established measures to deal with illegal trafficking in weapons and stipulates, among other things, the establishment within the legislation of signatory nations of modern and harmonized regulations; rapid communication among members; cooperation in resolving situations involving illegal arms trafficking in Central America; efforts to limit and control arms within each State; the submission of data on military expenditures and arms stockpiles for each State; and the organization of Central American register of arms and arms transfers. However the Treaty has been limited in its implementation, among other reasons, for lack of international legal assistance and cooperation as we seek to implement its programmes.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, known as the Ottawa Convention, is the result of an enormous international effort exerted by States, and international organizations including the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and eminent personalities. One of the most striking characteristics of anti-personnel mines is their indiscriminate effects and the fact that those effects are not time-bound. Once a mine has been placed it can stay active for a long period — more than 50 years. There are countries in which mines were laid during the Second World War that are still suffering from the consequences 57 years after the end of that conflict. A continuation of the vigorous campaign in line with the stipulations of the Ottawa Convention is indispensable for us to wipe out this scourge; otherwise, mines that are still being put in place might

even be capable of killing individuals in the middle of this century.

Nicaragua actively participated in the Ottawa process. Therefore, in the spirit of cooperation, collaboration and political determination, it signed the Ottawa Convention in December 1997 and ratified it on 30 November 1998. In September 2001, the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention was held at Managua. The Managua conference allowed us to renew the commitment of States parties and to note with satisfaction major strides in the crusade to eliminate anti-personnel mines.

At the conference on progress in demining in the Americas held in Managua on 27 and 28 August 2002, the representatives of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Colombia and Peru signed the Managua Appeal whereby they reaffirmed their unbreakable political determination to live up to the obligations flowing from the Ottawa Convention, including with respect to turning the western hemisphere into an area free of anti-personnel landmines.

In that document an urgent appeal is issued to the friendly countries of the donor community for assistance humanitarian mine clearance, particularly an appeal to States parties to the Ottawa Convention not to abandon or suspend the allocation of resources to countries of the Americas that have not yet completed their programmes of mine clearance or comprehensive mine action. Moreover, it calls for international cooperation to maintain and increase technical and financial assistance to all countries that have lived up to the commitments they entered into by signing, ratifying and implementing the obligations embodied in the Ottawa Convention. At the closing of that conference, President Enrique Bolaños declared Nicaragua to be a country free of mine stockpiles, having deactivated the last 18,313 mines that were still held in storage in Nicaragua, the last of an arsenal that numbered 133,435 at the time the Ottawa Convention was signed.

The job of destroying the mines buried in various places around the country is ongoing, a legacy of the civil war that we endured in the 1980s. According to estimates, somewhat more than 55,000 mines remain in Nicaragua's territory, the destruction of which is being carried out by the Nicaraguan armed forces with the help of the Programme of Assistance for Integral Action against Anti-personnel Mines of the Organization of American States (OAS); we hope this operation will be completed in 2004.

My Government firmly supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. Therefore, and as a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, we welcome with great satisfaction the decision of the Cuban Government to ratify that Treaty, which successfully establishes the first inhabited nuclear-weapon-free zone, comprising all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. We also support efforts made by the States parties to the Rarotonga and Bangkok Treaties and encourage States in areas covered by those Treaties to accede to them so as to contribute to strengthening international peace and security. We welcome with satisfaction the recent announcement that the States of Central Asia, namely Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, have decided to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

As was affirmed at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the full and effective application of the NPT and of the non-proliferation regime in all its aspects, plays a vital role in promoting international peace and security. Unfortunately, no major progress has been made in implementing the 13-measures action plan adopted by the States parties at that Conference.

The delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also of concern to us. We urge States that have still not yet signed or ratified it to do so as soon as possible.

Among efforts that are key to maintaining international peace and security made by the United Nations since its inception with the cooperation of its Member States, those in the arena of disarmament and non-proliferation stand out. Nicaragua, in common with most other countries throughout the world, shares the ideal that a world free of weapons of mass destruction will be achieved in the near future — a world free of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, whose effects are so frightful that they jeopardize the very existence of humankind. That is why my delegation attaches particular priority to efforts aimed at reducing and eventually destroying these weapons.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation takes pleasure in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee at this session. We extend those congratulations to the entire Bureau, wishing its members every success in dealing with the complex and sensitive issues affecting international peace and security.

We reaffirm our support for the statement delivered by Costa Rica on 1 October 2002 on behalf of the countries members of the Rio Group. However, we feel there are international peace and security issues and situations that are of great concern and therefore deserve the particular attention of Member States, both individually and collectively. We shall emphasize some of these, particularly from the latter perspective, inasmuch as the quest for solutions to global problems cannot be successful except through multilateralism, and particularly through our world Organization, one of whose tasks is that of harmonizing the efforts of nations to attain common ends.

Little more than a decade ago, changes in the international order, particularly the supposed disappearance of confrontation from international relations, raised high hopes for changes in the security policies of States, particularly those of major and medium-sized Powers, which were based upon nuclear and military power. Alas, reality has shown the picture to be a different and frustrating one. Instead of making progress in the process of eliminating weapons of mass destruction and achieving general disarmament, the persistence of conflict and mistrust in international relations and the complexity and global dimensions acquired by certain phenomena are prompting the retention of arsenals of all kinds of weapons and the pursuit of the development of new and more sophisticated military equipment.

This situation becomes more alarming given the development of nuclear capacity by additional States. Against the will and aspirations of peoples to live free from fear and the scourge of war, and against specific international agreements, they are pursuing a policy that runs counter to the efforts of the international community to halt the development of weapons of mass destruction or to achieve denuclearization and nuclear non-proliferation. This has revived the spectre of nuclear war.

Notwithstanding our small size and limited resources, and without seeking ourselves to possess such sophisticated weapons, we in El Salvador are not unaware of the serious consequences that stem from the use of weapons of mass destruction in armed conflict or what could happen at the global level, particularly if nuclear weapons were to be used. That is why we are united with and support those who are calling for compliance with and the full implementation of international instruments designed to achieve the prohibition, non-proliferation and elimination of such weapons, and for undertaking and concluding negotiations to avoid the resurgence of an arms race, which instead of providing greater security would instead sow greater fear and divert resources that under current international conditions could instead be used to promote the progress of nations, in particular that of the world's most disadvantaged peoples.

I shall refer in particular to three issues that we deem to be priority security matters: terrorism, disarmament and development, and our Millennium Summit commitments.

As to the first of these issues, the terrorist acts of 11 September 2001 in the United States, condemned and rejected by all States Members of the Organization, have changed the perceptions of States with regard to national, regional and international security policies. It is acknowledged that terrorism is a complex, difficult and unique challenge, that recognizes neither frontiers nor principles, so that it can be fought effectively and efficiently only through international unity, coordination and cooperation, and through the consensus adoption of measures and machinery consistent with the international obligations that stem from the provisions of the Charter, international law and international humanitarian law in particular.

In this context we affirm our political will and our firm commitment to the collective global fight against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Here, we express our appreciation for the job done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee of the Security Council, which in our judgement should become a coordinating centre for the international community's efforts to eliminate this scourge.

Convinced as we are of the importance of collective efforts in the never-ending fight against the irrationality and intolerance of extremist groups, we recall that El Salvador will host the third meeting of

the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, to be held in the first half of the year 2003 in San Salvador, at which we hope and expect that major and feasible decisions will be adopted to strengthen the fight against terrorism.

As to the issue of the relationship between disarmament and development, we regret that the Secretary-General's report (A/57/167 and Add.1) concluded that given the financial limitations of the Organization and reduced support from Member States, it has been possible to enact only a reduced programme of activities to implement the action programme adopted at the 1987 International Conference. My delegation finds it hard to understand how it is possible that many States devote large sums in their budgets to defence purposes while there are major sectors of the world's population that could benefit from a reduction in military expenditures. We believe that many countries, particularly the industrialized ones, could make efforts to trim their military expenditures and reallocate the funds to promoting development, particularly that of the underdeveloped countries. In this context we support the proposal made by the Secretary-General in his report to study the possibility of creating a group of governmental experts to undertake a reappraisal of the relationship between disarmament and development in the current international context, as well as the future role of the Organization in this connection.

Finally, we deem it important to recall that at the Millennium Summit, heads of State or Government committed themselves, with respect to peace, security and disarmament, to spare no effort to free peoples from the scourge of war, eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, to take concerted action against international terrorism and to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons, taking account of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Two years have gone by since the Millennium Declaration and its commitments are still far from being met. If we do not want to go on frustrating the hopes of peoples to live in peace and free from the fear of violence and war, we will have to live up to our commitments, putting into practice the values and principles we acknowledged in the Millennium Declaration, in particular the matter of solidarity and shared responsibility in adopting measures that would allow us to attain not only the broad goals of disarmament but also the goals regarding the economic and social development of peoples, particularly that of the least developed countries.

Mr. Coskun (Turkey): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the work of the First Committee. I am confident that under your able stewardship the Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda.

Turkey perceives the arms control and disarmament process as a significant dimension of its national security policy. As a corollary, we attach great importance to fulfilling the obligations emanating from international agreements and arrangements. We are committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. That goal should be pursued realistically through a balanced approach encompassing steps relating to both nuclear and conventional arms.

In the field of conventional arms control, Turkey attaches the utmost importance to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), which continues to play a vital role in the European security architecture and makes an indispensable contribution to security and stability in its area of application and beyond.

Mindful of the serious threat posed to international peace and security by the illicit trade in small arms, and of the destabilizing impact of the illegal transfer of such weapons on a regional level, Turkey actively participates in efforts to control small arms and light weapons. The present challenge is the implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York in July 2001. We believe that the Conference provided a good opportunity to consider effective ways of combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons. Hence, Turkey has taken great interest in the relevant work of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and has contributed to related discussions within other United Nations bodies. For more effective international control, Turkey encourages transparency in the transfer of conventional weapons. In this context, it advocates the expansion of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to include small arms

and light weapons categories. Turkey also supports similar initiatives under the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement and that of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Notwithstanding the hopes for a safer environment brought about by the end of the cold war, the world has experienced a proliferation of regional conflicts and armed hostilities and has witnessed a trend leading to the spread and destabilizing accumulation of sophisticated weapons systems, including weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery are a tangible and growing threat facing our nations. Despite efforts by the international community to devise comprehensive and effective arms control and disarmament measures, some countries, albeit few in number, still continue to improve and/or seek to acquire nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and related technologies.

Moreover, the progressive improvements in the range and accuracy of ballistic missiles render the threat of proliferation all the more worrying, since they make weapons of mass destruction readily usable. The Middle East and North Africa are home to the highest concentration of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile programmes compared with any other region in the world. In order to understand the rationale behind this high-level proliferation in the Middle East, it would be worthwhile to look at the root causes of the problem from a wider perspective. Any credible effort aimed at finding a lasting solution to the problem of proliferation in the Middle East must first and foremost address the issue of eradicating all weapons of mass destruction in the region. We believe that arms control agreements and non-proliferation regimes will continue to restrain the proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

We are all aware that many of the technologies associated with weapons of mass destruction programmes also have legitimate civilian or military applications. As dual-use technology and expertise continue to spread internationally, the prospects for nuclear, biological and chemical terrorism are also growing. The relative ease with which such weapons are produced, coupled with the willingness of some States to cooperate with terrorist, extremist or organized crime groups, increases our concern that we could see, especially, chemical and biological weapons ending up in unwanted hands. We observe with concern the ongoing transfers of weapons of mass destruction and related material and technology. If this trend continues, the primary customers of these materials might themselves become the suppliers for possible other proliferators over the next decade.

Therefore, we also believe in the necessity of extreme vigilance in the transfers of sensitive material and technology to regions that are of particular concern, such as the Middle East. While the main responsibility for effective international cooperation for the prevention of proliferation lies mainly with supplier countries, countries located on the routes of transfer should shoulder their responsibility and cooperate with the suppliers to prevent unauthorized access to these materials and technologies.

The international community is being challenged not only by the risks brought about by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also by their means of delivery. In a precarious geographical situation, the proliferation of ballistic missiles, with its destabilizing consequences, is of particular concern for Turkey. We see an urgent need for a global, multilateral approach to intensify existing efforts against ballistic missile proliferation. Turkey strongly supports the process of universalization of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation and we are looking forward to the launching conference, to take place at The Hague in November.

It is Turkey's desire to see all countries in its region and beyond, share the goals of non-proliferation and work collectively towards their achievement. After establishing at the national level the necessary export control regulations, Turkey joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group and became a member of the Australian Group. Turkey has also assumed its responsibilities in the Wassenaar Arrangement and he Missile Technology Control Regime, and has joined the Zangger Committee. This complements the commitments that we have undertaken by virtue of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

As a further manifestation of our non-proliferation policies, we became one of the first signatories to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Turkey is among the 44 countries whose ratifications are required for the entry into force of the Treaty. Being fully aware of this special

responsibility conferred on us in the service of international non-proliferation efforts, we have done our best for the early ratification of the Treaty. The ratification process was completed and the instrument of ratification was deposited with the Secretary-General in 2000. The effective implementation of the CTBT will certainly be beneficial to the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and to its pillar, the NPT. We consider the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a landmark of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Turkey therefore supports all efforts aimed at bringing the Treaty into force at the earliest possible date. In this context, the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs took part in the launching of the joint ministerial statement on the CTBT on 14 September 2002 here at the United Nations. Now, taking this opportunity, we would like once again to renew our call to all nations that have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT at the earliest possible date.

The NPT, which establishes a global norm of nuclear non-proliferation with its 187 States parties, is one of the most remarkable treaties of all time. The indefinite extension of the Treaty has made it a permanent feature of the global security edifice. Turkey has all along been an ardent supporter of the NPT and its lofty goals. We strictly abide by the provisions of the Treaty. The 2000 NPT Review Conference held in New York offered the first opportunity to consider in detail the operation of the Treaty since its indefinite extension. Turkey participated constructively in the Spring 2002 preparations for the NPT review process with a view to ensuring the success of the 2005 Review Conference.

We welcome the signing of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Strategic Offensive Reductions and the Joint Declaration by President Bush and President Putin on the new strategic relationship between those two countries. We see the Treaty as a step forward in the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements concluded freely between States in their respective regions, will strengthen global as well as regional peace and security. Turkey will continue to support the establishment of such zones wherever possible and feasible. In this context we are pleased that the negotiations on a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty have almost been concluded. We are looking forward to the signing of the treaty in the near future.

Turkey always places special emphasis on, and supports, the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and the verification mechanisms. We believe that IAEA safeguards play a key role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime and that their universal application is of paramount importance. Effective IAEA safeguards are needed to prevent the use of nuclear material for prohibited purposes. Likewise, effective safeguards are also needed for facilitating cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy without the risk of diversion to prohibited activities and uses. In this context Turkey supports the measures to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of the safeguards system. Turkey itself has concluded and implements an Additional Protocol with the IAEA for that purpose. However, the overall progress on the number of States concluding and implementing Additional Protocols leaves much to be desired. In that regard, we would like to echo the resolution adopted at the forty-sixth regular session of the General Conference of the IAEA and urge all States which have yet to bring into force comprehensive safeguards agreements to do so as soon as possible.

Turkey believes that the Conference on Disarmament must retain its role as the single multilateral negotiating forum in the field of disarmament. However, the lack of progress in the Conference for the past four years has been a major cause of disappointment for us. We believe that we should avoid creating the wrong impression that the Conference is becoming an ineffective body. We had hoped that the positive outcome of the 2000 NPT Review Conference would be a source of inspiration at the beginning of the 2001 session. However, our hopes were not realized due to some divergent views on how to set out the work programme of the Conference on Disarmament. It is a fact that the Conference can easily become a hostage to the dynamics of the outside world. There are times also when it cannot keep pace with the changes that unfold in the international arena. That was the case when the international community was unable to benefit fully from the propitious environment that the end of the cold war provided. The reality of today is such that the key players, perhaps with the best of intentions, continue to pursue diverging means for the

same end, that is to enhance global security and stability in the post-cold-war era. Turkey is fully committed to the unique role of the Conference on Disarmament and thinks that the Conference should do its utmost to be responsive to both present and future dangers. We sincerely hope that with new initiatives and efforts an atmosphere of convergence will prevail over divergence and that the current stalemate on the work programme of the CD will be circumvented.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is unique of its kind with its provisions aimed at prohibiting and eliminating an entire category of weapons of mass destruction under strict and effective international verification and control. Since its entry into force, the growth in the number of States parties to the Convention is encouraging. Turkey has been a party to the CWC since 1997 and is firmly committed to its objectives. We have made the necessary adaptations in our national legislation to meet the requirements of the Convention. We also try to encourage other countries, especially those in our neighbourhood, which have not yet signed or ratified the CWC to become parties to it. Turkey is determined to continue its efforts in the future towards ensuring the non-proliferation of such weapons.

Likewise, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention represents a key instrument to prevent biological toxin materials from being used as weapons. The recent bioterrorism that emerged in the form of anthrax attacks is a clear indication of the need for resolute action against biological weapons as well. There is no doubt that we must approach the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention with new vigour and renewed sense of urgency. We attach the utmost importance to the work of strengthening the verification of inspection mechanisms. I think it is high time to make every effort to establish a multilaterally negotiated compliance and verification mechanism. We also have to be vigilant about its universality and effective implementation.

The Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which will resume its work on 11 November this year, is yet another opportunity to reinforce the multilateral system of disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope for a successful outcome of the Review Conference.

Important progress has been registered also against the use of anti-personnel landmines. With the concerted effort of States and non-governmental organizations, 143 countries are now States parties to the Ottawa Convention. Turkey is fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. The security situation around Turkey precluded it from signing the Convention at the time of its conclusion. Nevertheless, as an expression of its commitment to the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, Turkey extended its national moratorium on the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines indefinitely in March this year and concluded several bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries with a view to establishing regimes for keeping common borders free from these mines.

Last year I announced to this Committee my Government's firm decision to become a party to the Convention. Our intention to that effect was made public on 6 April 2001 during the visit of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece to Turkey. On that occasion the Foreign Ministers of both countries decided that Turkey and Greece would simultaneously deposit their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations following the completion of their respective constitutional procedures. At this juncture, I should like to report that the Convention has been submitted to the Turkish Parliament for ratification. On 9 May this year the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Parliament endorsed the Convention and conveyed it to our General Assembly for final approval.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Matoq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am sorry to speak at this late hour but it behoves me to answer the representative of the Zionist entity. I have the following observations to make. First, the history of the Zionist entity is black, and replete with murder, destruction, crimes, terrorist acts against civilians, and the use of all kinds of weaponry whose use against innocent civilians is prohibited. The criminal terrorist acts of the Zionist entity against the Palestinian people are clear evidence of this terrorist propensity.

Secondly, the Zionist entity does not respect international resolutions. Scores of resolutions have been adopted against that entity. It has not implemented or complied with any of those resolutions. I mention

especially its recent crimes in the occupied territories and its criminal acts in the Jenin camp, together with its prevention of any humanitarian assistance from reaching the wounded and the innocent in that camp. The terrorist acts against civilians in that camp contravene human values, ethics and norms.

Thirdly, the international community is well aware that the Zionist entity possesses a huge arsenal of weapons of mass destruction built up by theft and by smuggling and by obtaining components from companies and agents throughout the world. The Zionist entity has an arsenal of nuclear weapons ranging between 200 and 400 nuclear warheads. That information was disclosed by Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli technician who escaped to Britain in 1986, and was published in *The Times* newspaper. He described the Dimona reactor as the largest plutonium reactor for producing nuclear weapons.

Fourthly, the Zionist entity has a large network of ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads and other weapons of mass destruction. It has recently equipped its submarines with such warheads with a capability of reaching all Arab lands. The Zionist entity launched a series of spy satellites over the Arab States, the latest of which is an Offuk 5 which is devoted to intelligence and espionage purposes against Arab military capabilities.

Fifthly, the Zionist entity is the only party in the Middle East that has not acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) or subjected its nuclear installations to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards regime. Together with its allies, it opposes the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

All those notorious acts were carried out by the Zionist entity. Its representative sheds crocodile tears in this Committee over the so-called peace in the Middle East that they want to impose under a Zionist nuclear threat with the support of the United States of America, the entity's main ally. The United States of America deals in a selective and discriminatory manner with this matter: while it calls for keeping the world free from weapons of mass destruction, it will not compel the Zionist entity to abandon its stupendous arsenal of such weapons. However, the United States demands that other countries do so. I want to make it clear, therefore, that the Zionist entity violates and does not respect international legitimacy, so it has no right to speak of it.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): As the representative of Israel referred in his statement to my country, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, allow me to use my right of reply in the following manner. There is an Arab proverb that says "Listen and you will be happy; experience and you will be sad." That proverb clearly applies to the way in which the representatives of Israel use the Committees of the General Assembly. We hear idealistic theories about disarmament and peace, respect for international legality and respect for civilians. Such mythical things show Israel always as the victim. On that basis, allow me to explain that anyone who listens to the statement of the representative of Israel would be happy and pleased but anyone who sees his country's actions on the ground would be sad and bitterly disappointed.

The representative of Israel told us that Israel has a special perspective on disarmament in the Middle East. What does the representative of Israel want to mean by that perspective? The treaties that Israel would impose on neighbouring countries are not peace treaties but are treaties of surrender. Israel will not give up its weapons until after it imposes treaties of surrender through exploitation of the military imbalance between the two sides. The peace that Israel wants is based not on the logic or rights but on the logic of might.

Secondly, the representative of Israel is not ashamed to speak so flagrantly about casualties among innocent civilian. Two days ago an Israeli Apache helicopter bombed with missiles innocent Palestinian civilians and killed 16 of them. The representative of Israel is now talking about civilian casualties. Who among us does not remember the image of the child, Mohamad Al-Durra, who was killed in his father's arms. Now the representative of Israel speaks about innocent civilian casualties. We cannot forget the Qana massacre and how the Israeli occupation forces then in southern Lebanon deliberately targeted and bombed a facility of the Fiji contingent of the United Nations forces and killed more than 100 Lebanese civilians who were under the protection of the international forces of this Organization. Now the representative of Israel speaks about civilian casualties.

The representative of Israel talks about ground-to-ground missiles deployed in southern Lebanon. We

emphasize what my Government has previously declared, that this claim is nothing but false propaganda and has no basis in reality. But we are not at all surprised by what the representative of Israel says. What would you like the representative of Israel to say? Israel has today developed a complex because of its ugly defeat at the hands of the Lebanese resistance in the south. I am not surprised at anything he says about the Lebanese resistance or at any of the arguments and pretexts that he has given us, because we know full well that all this is nothing but the result of their hatred and psychosis as a result of the defeat by the Lebanese resistance and the shameful Israeli withdrawal two years ago.

The representative of Israel says that some States have ballistic missiles. Fine. He reminds me of what Jesus Christ said. The representative of Israel sees flaws in others but does not see any flaws in himself. They have nuclear warheads and bacteriological and chemical weapons, and they threaten Arab countries with those weapons every day. Yet now he comes and says that some Arab countries have ballistic missiles. Moreover, by possessing such ballistic missiles, Israel is contravening the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council which compel it to subject its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As is well known, it has completely refused to do that.

Finally, allow me to deal with the last point made by the representative of Israel: his call for peace. He spoke about a Utopia of peace, another matter which should come under the proverb: "Listen, and you will be happy; experience and you will be sad". We wish once again to recall the Arab peace initiative that was adopted in Beirut, the capital of my country, at the Arab Summit, which gave Israel one condition — withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories — and offered it the right to existence and recognition. It also offered it normal relations, which were not set forth by international resolutions. What was the reaction of Israel that day? I will remind members. On 29 March 2002 Israeli tanks, in response, went into the headquarters of President Arafat in Ramallah. That was the response of the Israeli Government and the response of the Prime Minister of Israel to the Arab initiative made in Beirut, which, I repeat once again, was accepted by all Arab States.

Mr. Issacharoff (Israel): In view of the late hour I have no intention of getting involved in an intense political exchange here, but I should like to say that I was rather surprised by the fact that Iraq had taken such exception to my speech. After all, I merely related policies that his Government has adopted and implemented over the years. But I was not surprised by the incredibly intense rhetoric that the Iraqi representative employed towards my country, Israel, a word too difficult for him even to pronounce. That, more than anything, sums up the essential thrust of the message that I tried to convey earlier, and illustrates the real challenges and profound hostility that we face in our area.

As for the Lebanese delegation, I would have been happier had they looked to the other side of our message and not sought a means of polemical exchange on many different issues. We also have a history and a litany of terrorist acts that we have suffered in the north of our country. Only today there was another suicide bombing in Israel. So when I talk about attacks on innocent civilians I know what I am talking about. I also invite the Lebanese Government to bring a measure of stability to the south of its country; perhaps it is time for it to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as Israel did two years ago.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): We truly want to be able to look forward to peace. That is what we want and that is what I meant when I referred to the Arab peace initiative taken in Beirut. As for the two other points that the representative of Israel referred to concerning civilian casualties, I will not be more royal than the king. The Palestinian Authority itself has condemned and continues to condemn the killing of civilians on both sides. That is what the Security Council resolutions do. We are not trying to supersede the Palestinians: They have spoken of this matter. As for the calm in southern Lebanon, that is what we want. We hope that Israeli fighter planes will refrain from violating Lebanese airspace daily, so that we can get calm on the Lebanese borders.

The Chairman: The Committee has heard the last speaker inscribed on the list of speakers for this afternoon's meeting and has thus concluded its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items.

Organization of work

The Chairman: In accordance with the First Committee's programme of work and timetable, the Committee will embark on the second phase of its work, namely the thematic discussion on item subjects as well as the introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items — items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 — on Monday 14 October 2002.

In order to have a structured discussion and to fully and efficiently utilize the conference facilities available to the Committee, and after consultations with other members of the Bureau, I have prepared an indicative timetable, based on the established practice of the Committee, for that phase of the work of the Committee. The indicative timetable has been distributed to the Committee as document A/C.1/57/CRP.2.

In submitting this indicative timetable I followed the practice established by the First Committee at previous sessions of the General Assembly. I should like to propose that we carry out our discussion in the following manner: the meeting on Monday, 14 October, will be dedicated to questions related to nuclear weapons; the meeting on Tuesday, 15 October, will be devoted to other weapons of mass destruction and to disarmament aspects of outer space; the meeting on Wednesday, 16 October, will be devoted to questions concerning conventional weapons; at the two meetings on Thursday, 17 October, we will discuss regional disarmament, confidence-building measures including transparency in armaments, together with other disarmament measures and disarmament machinery; and on Friday, 18 October, the Committee will discuss international security and related matters of disarmament and international security.

In this connection, I should like to indicate that in case we finish the discussion of issues planned for a given meeting before the end of the meeting, we will move on to the next issue on our timetable. I kindly ask delegations to be prepared to do so. It is understood that a degree of flexibility will be maintained and delegations will be given an opportunity to address any question at any time if they so desire.

The indicative timetable, as I have just outlined, is rather flexible, as we experienced at previous sessions, and is in accordance with decisions adopted on the rationalization of the work of the Committee. In other words, the Committee's work will combine the discussion of specific subjects and the introduction or consideration of all draft resolutions so that sufficient time will be allowed for informal consultations and discussions of all draft resolutions. I should like to reiterate that we will be flexible to accommodate the wishes of delegations. I should like also to mention that at the last meeting of this stage of our work, that is on 18 October, delegations will still be able to introduce any remaining draft resolutions. That certainly will enable the Committee to have sufficient time during the action phase of its work. I strongly urge all delegations to do their utmost to introduce their draft resolutions during the second phase of the work of the Committee next week.

If I hear no objection I will take it that the proposed indicative timetable for our thematic discussion is acceptable to delegations.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: In order to organize forthcoming meetings I suggest that delegations should inscribe their names on the list of speakers for the specific meetings, if possible. If not, requests for interventions will be taken directly from the floor.

I should like to remind delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions on all disarmament and international security agenda items is today, Thursday, 10 October 2002, at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.